

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 210474

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINT, LE, SY

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO BEIRUT

1. SENATOR ABOUREZK HAS PROPOSED THAT A HIGH-LEVEL CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE BRANCH DELEGATION BE SENT TO BEIRUT WITH THE IDEA OF SHOWING USG CONCERN FOR THE LEBANESE SITUATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT. HE PROPOSED INITIALLY THAT THE SECRETARY LEAD THE PARTY, BUT WE MADE CLEAR THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE. WE ALSO SAID THAT, IF HE AND OTHER CONGRESSMEN SHOULD DECIDE TO GO, THE TOTAL PARTY SHOULD BE SMALL BECAUSE OF SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS. WE DID NOT WANT TO OPPOSE ANYTHING THAT MIGHT DO SOME GOOD. WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO SPONSOR SUCH A VISIT DIRECTLY, BUT WE WOULD CERTAINLY FACILITATE IT. WE ALSO TOLD HIM WE HAD SCANNED THE POSSIBILITIES, AS HE HAD EARLIER ASKED, FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF SOME ENHANCED AID, BUT EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE
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AT THIS TIME. ABOUREZK SAID A COMMITMENT TO A SPECIFIC AMOUNT OF AID WAS NOT SO IMPORTANT; HAVING THE DELEGATION ANNOUNCE A STRONG STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT AND REITERATING THE COMMITMENT TO REBUILD THE NATIONAL ARMY WAS THE IMPORTANT THING.

2. WITHOUT SOUNDING OUT THE GOVERNMENT, WOULD APPRECIATE

YOUR VIEWS ON SUCH A DELEGATION, WHAT SIZE WOULD BE BEST,
AND THE LIKELY LEBANESE REACTION, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. VANCE

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